

Interview with Perry J. Stieglitz

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PERRY J. STIEGLITZ

Interviewed by: G. Lewis Schmidt

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Q: This is Lew Schmidt interviewing Perry Stieglitz at his office which is the Office of the Representative of Gibraltar in the United States. This is May 18, 1992. Perry, I am going to ask you to start off with a brief background on your place of birth, early history, your education and what you did, if any- thing, before you came into the employment of the U.S. Information Agency, and what it was that brought you into the Agency in the first place. From there on, we will trace your career.

Bio Sketch

STIEGLITZ: I was born in New York State, received my bachelor degree from New York University, and began my graduate studies at Harvard. When World War II began, I left Harvard for the Navy's so-called 90-day wonder plan, spent aboard a converted old battleship in New York, at the end of which time we came out as naval officers. Most of the next four years found me either in the Atlantic or the Pacific.

At the end of the war, when I was discharged, I worked for a year in Hollywood as a writer. I wrote the scripts for two quite bad movies. Then I decided to continue my studies and went to Switzerland, to Lausanne. In that period, for those who may have forgotten, there

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was a GI Bill of Rights for the veterans of World War II — this made it possible for us to continue our studies anywhere, in any country, and the government gave us a low but sufficient stipend to study and live on decently.

1959 Appointment To A Fulbright Teaching Assignment In Laos Leads To Eventual Entrance Into USIA

After my years in Switzerland, I returned to New York and was given a teaching appointment at Hunter College. As soon as I received tenure from Hunter, I applied for and received a Fulbright grant. I had requested one to take me back to Europe for a year but was told via a telephone call from Washington that they needed a French-speaking teacher in Laos. I was a bachelor and didn't hesitate to accept, even though I may not have been certain where and what Laos was.

Consequently in September of that year I flew to Asia and up to Vientiane. The program there was under the sponsorship of the U.S. Information Service. Charles Searles, the American cultural attach# in Vientiane, was in charge of the program. He was a fine fellow and did a great deal to make my life pleasant, although my living conditions were somewhat on the primitive side — transportation was a bicycle, and my lodgings were so meager they lacked cooking facilities.

I was the first American to be accepted as a teacher in the French lycee of Vientiane. The French in charge of the school were deeply suspicious of having an American on their staff. I had been told I would be teaching the senior classes of English but instead was given the beginner classes — and lots of them. Nevertheless, Laos itself was unique and seductive. The classical dance and music were enchanting, and bicycle excursions around the countryside — generally with colleagues from the Lycee — were delightful. My list of friends and acquaintances became long among the Lao, members of the French faculty and the French embassy, and Americans from the American embassy.

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Near the end of the school year, a USIS inspection party headed by Dan Oleksiw came to Vientiane. After they had been there for several weeks, Dan called me in to tell me they had been observing my activities and asked if I would be interested in joining USIA.

I liked the idea and agreed to be a candidate. When I returned to Washington, I went through a series of examinations including a three-hour oral session during which I was subjected to a barrage of questions by six State Department officials. Then because in those days they decided that before sending people overseas they should see a psychiatrist, I was sent to a psychiatrist in New York who happened to be a Frenchman. He and I got on the topic of French literature and most of our time together was spent on that. So much for my psychiatric exam.

Before I was scheduled to report into the Information Agency, I was asked by the Department of Education if I would undertake a project in Finland. I was given leave from Hunter College once more to go to Finland for four months. While in that handsome northern country, I traveled about for four months to set up four posts at which Americans teachers would teach English. The project worked well and had a duration of some years.

1961: Branch Public Affairs In Souvannakhet, Laos

Back in Washington, I was informed that my first USIS post was in Laos, but not in Vientiane. Rather, I was to be branch post officer in Souvannakhet, a city on the Mekong that was later to have an unfortunate political significance. It was a small city, and my principal activities included setting up a library, used largely by the high school students, and taking excursions into the neighboring villages to speak to the village chiefs and find out what they most needed. I would be accompanied by health medics who would examine the sick, and by motion picture technicians who would show USIS-made films to the people in the evenings.

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While in Savannakhet I got to know a good many Lao, including the General of the southern armies — my friendship with him remained through the years. Becoming part of that community — participating in their rituals — being asked to be one of the judges at their annual boat races — was exotic and exhilarating.

After numerous complications, I found a house in the city, and brought down an excellent Vietnamese cook and butler to take care of it. It permitted me to entertain my Lao friends, which I took pleasure in doing.

Q: Did you find that the Lao retained any of the French suspicion and perhaps prejudice against Americans or were they pretty much free of prejudice by then? And how did you find your ability to mix with them on a personal basis?

STIEGLITZ: I found no anti-American prejudice among the Lao in Savannakhet. My personal relationships with them were generally excellent, as were my relationships with the French who were in the city. To cite an example, there was a French commissary at the nearby airport of Seno. I had a problem getting food items and such from Vientiane, and the French granted me full use of their commissary — a most generous gesture. The Lao have always been a gentle, loving, caring people.

Q: Did you ever, at any time after your return to Vientiane or elsewhere in Laos, feel that the people themselves had any suspicion of Americans that they might have obtained from the French or was it always pretty much an open sesame as far as you were concerned?

STIEGLITZ: The latter. Let me cite another example. Before I left Savannakhet, the General of the Southern Lao armies invited me to go with his wife and himself down to his town of Champassak in southern Laos and spend a few days there as his guest. It was unforgettable, especially doing the Lao dance, the lam-vong, at an open-air pavilion on the banks of the Mekong.

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One problem in Savannakhet was the lack of support I received from the USIS people in Vientiane. The field officer was extremely unpleasant. He was infinitely more suspicious of me than were the Lao and French put together. He did not like my being a New Yorker and a teacher of literature. He liked to give the impression that he was a gung-ho type, and kept a gun on this hip — although it was against the rules — pretending that there were enemies around each corner. He obviously wanted people to believe that he was with the CIA rather than USIA, but I trust no CIA officer would have been so obvious and obnoxious. He was so dreadful and unhelpful that at one point I wondered whether I really wanted to continue in this situation. But I was too proud to give in to him and stayed on.

1962: Called Up To Vientiane By New PAO To Become Information Officer/Laos

Eventually a new USIS team arrived in Vientiane, and the situation changed at once entirely for the better. The new PAO came down to visit Savannakhet, and asked me to come up to Vientiane to be his information officer.

Q: Who was that?

STIEGLITZ: Gerry Gert, a splendid PAO. It was a pleasure working for him. Being an information officer was not at all what I had had in mind when I had joined the Agency. I had expected to remain in cultural affairs, but it was the information slot that was open, and I did the best I could with it for the year.

While in Vientiane, because I was a decent bridge player and because the Prime Minister of Laos, Prince Souvanna Phouma, was a great bridge player and always on the lookout for fresh blood at the bridge table, I had the good fortune one evening to have one of the Prime Minister's French friends bring me to the residence for an evening of bridge. Even more fortunately, I played fairly well that night and consequently was invited back a number of times. That was how I got to know the Prince.

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When it was time for me to leave Laos, to my great joy my next assignment was as Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer in Paris. I went to call on the Prime Minister to say goodbye. He graciously received me. I asked, "Altesse, is there anything I can do for you in Paris?" He replied, "Oh, no." And then he added, "Yes. Once in a while, look after my children."

1963: Transferred To Paris Where He Was Supposed To Be Assistant Cultural Officer But Closing Of Field Posts Caused Him To Be Made Officer In Charge Of All Cultural Programs Outside Of Paris

Q: What year was this?

STIEGLITZ: This was in 1963. I got to Paris at the very time the branch posts of USIA were being closed. As you recall, we kept opening and closing branch posts, and this was a period of closure. Lee Brady was the PAO. I hadn't been there more than a few weeks when Lee called me into his office to tell me he was giving me the best possible assignment. He explained what it was, and I agreed it was the best. He put me in charge of all cultural and informational programs throughout France, outside of Paris.

Q: Were you still based in Paris?

STIEGLITZ: Yes. I had an apartment in Paris and an office and assistant at the embassy, but most of my time was spent going about the country, creating and directing cultural and informational programs. It was glorious.

In good weather, I would drive. During the winter, I would take the train or fly. As a consequence, I got to know France far better than most Frenchmen could ever hope to know it. I got to know the mayors of the cities, the publishers and editors of the newspapers, the directors of the museums. With Helen Baltrusaitis at our embassy in

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Paris, we put together some outstanding American art shows and sent them to the various museums in the provinces.

Mym Johnston, who had been in Paris for a while, was asked to work with me, and the two of us occupied ourselves with this activity for four years. I received a USIA honor award for what we accomplished.

This was during the years of General de Gaulle. The French television was strongly slanted in an anti-American way. Every night there would be another anti-American story telecast. I remember at one point calling on the publisher of one of the two newspapers in Strasbourg. During the course of our conversation. I asked about how much anti-Americanism there was in the region. He said, "Virtually none." I queried, "How does that happen?" He replied, "Here everyone watches German television."

Successes of Cultural Programs in the Field, With One Exception in Amiens: Vice President Humphrey's Speech Attempting To Justify U.S. War In Vietnam

The programs went extremely well. The climax was American month in Toulouse. The city did not share General de Gaulle's anti-Americanism, and so the officials took the opportunity to go all out to support our program. Among the many activities was an enormous exhibit of American art at the great Musee des Augustins, and Menotti operas at the Opera House.

Q: Who were the singers? Did you have an American cast?

STIEGLITZ: We had Marie Powers herself who originated the role of the Medium. We also got the traveling company of "Porgy and Bess" who gave several performances at the Opera House. That scored a tremendous success — the Toulouse audience was wildly enthusiastic about the American performers.

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We had an Alexander Calder exhibit at the secondary museum. Best of all, at the university we had a series of lectures. We brought speakers in from Paris, particularly eminent French authorities, who spoke on American history, political science, and other subjects.

Q: How did you find any French professors who would have a reasonable attitude towards the United States?

STIEGLITZ: That proved to be no problem. In the upper intellectual echelons, evident in the universities, many French deplored the General's attitude. Professor Jean Baptiste Duroselle of the Sorbonne was a leading authority who helped me enormously in this matter. We had some very big names coming down to speak in Toulouse. To my great satisfaction, the last group of speakers drew a capacity audience in the largest auditorium of the university.

Q: And was the audience favorably disposed?

STIEGLITZ: Mostly yes.

Q: Did you find that outside of Paris the anti-American influence produced and encouraged by De Gaulle then was less pervasive?

STIEGLITZ: For the most part. On the other hand, I had one bad experience in the city of Amiens. We had an excellent three-day program scheduled there with concerts, art exhibits, lectures, etc. Charles Bohlen was our Ambassador, and he, of course, was superb. He lent his complete support to my programs. Also, he was my star American attraction who would come and preside over programs where I particularly wanted him to be. In his honor, the Prefet would generally have a dinner and perhaps other events.

Q: Bohlen preceded Shriver?

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STIEGLITZ: Yes, he did.

What happened in Amiens is that — it was Hubert Humphrey who was Vice President at that time — and Humphrey came to Paris and spoke in Paris the week before our Amiens program. The result was disastrous. Humphrey spoke of the Vietnam situation and made a great pitch for what the Americans were doing in Vietnam. During that time, many Americans themselves were shouting their protests. The French students, liberals, leftists were all well aware of this. By the time of the Amiens program the situation in that city became tense. To my chagrin, the very nervous Prefet in Amiens at the last gathering, a luncheon at the Prefecture in honor of the Ambassador and Mrs. Bohlen, made the decision that the Bohlens had to leave the city by a back route so that no one would see them. This I thought was disgraceful. Actually Humphrey was most indiscreet in coming to Paris at the time and stirring people up.

Q: He probably went on the insistence of Lyndon Johnson and had no choice.

STIEGLITZ: I suppose you are quite right, and I am blaming the messenger. That was my worst moment in those four years. Most of the other program was highly successful. Arthur Rubenstein played for us in Nice, Isaac Stern in Montpellier. They volunteered.

At the end of four years, I was sorry to be leaving Paris.

1967: Transferred Back To Laos As Cultural Attach#, But Just Before Leaving Paris, Meets Princess Moune Souvanna Phouma Who Ultimately Becomes Mrs. Stieglitz

Q: You left when?

STIEGLITZ: In 1967. But I have to mention this. While in Paris, I knew the Lao Ambassador, and one day at the Lao Embassy, at a reception, I saw this young woman enter the room. I was literally smitten at first sight, and asked who she was. She was the daughter of Prince Souvanna Phouma.

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Q: She had not been in Laos when you were there?

STIEGLITZ: No, she hadn't. She was working at UNESCO in Paris, and when I met her, she had just separated from her husband, a French count. Her mother was friendly and invited me to a party. From then on, I lost no time in trying to advance my friendship with Moune Souvanna Phouma. Near the end of my stay in France, Moune left to return to Laos to be Chef de Cabinet in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She had been educated at the Institute of Political Science in Paris, and was therefore well qualified to be in the government.

Then someone from USIA Washington came to Paris to speak to us about our assignments. In those days everyone was supposed to be going to Vietnam. He assured me that my position would be in Saigon. I said that I would prefer to go back to Laos — that I had learned some of the language and could be more immediately effective there. I did not mention my personal reasons for wishing to go to Vientiane, but by great good fortune, the cultural attach# position in Vientiane fell open just at that moment. So I went from Paris back to Laos to be the Cultural Attach# at the Embassy.

Q: And by some coincidence, Moune was there?

STIEGLITZ: Yes, indeed — at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And the very first evening I was there, she and her father cordially received me at his residence.

I was able to do quite a few things for our program in Laos. We were putting up a new cultural center, and some of my ideas were incorporated into that building. When a group of American musicians came, I was able to persuade the Prime Minister to be the guest of honor at their concert.

Q: Was Dave Sheppard the PAO at that time?

STIEGLITZ: Dave Sheppard, the best of all PAOs, was there at that time.

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Q: Unfortunately his wife became ill...

STIEGLITZ: While we were there. Moune and I had become close to Dave and Peggy. He seemed to be everything a PAO should be, including terribly smart. I had disliked the previous USIS programs for Laos. They tried to stir the people up and tell them how rotten the enemy was. With Dave, it was constructive. He saw things in another way and tried to help build these people, to make them strong, pleased with themselves. This allowed them to realize what the enemy was trying to do to them. I was happy to work with Dave.

Peggy became ill and had to be evacuated. Then Dave left. He didn't want to come back under the circumstances.

Before the year was up, Moune and I were married. We were married in her father's home in a Buddhist ceremony.

Q: This was one case where the prominent father was in favor of the groom, I gather.

STIEGLITZ: Well, the prominent father was the leader of the Buddhists in his country, and Buddhists have, as you know, this profound sense of tolerance. I was completely accepted. Of course I asked his permission before, and he said he wanted whatever would make his daughter happy.

Q: I had an old professor in Chinese studies at my university who used to say that Buddhism was the most comfortable religion in the whole world. And I think he is probably right.

STIEGLITZ: I certainly think so. I have often attended Buddhist services and never felt like a stranger at one. You never are a stranger there. It is extraordinary.

Q: This is none of my business particularly, but was Moune a Buddhist or had she become Catholicised with her exposure to France?

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STIEGLITZ: Moune's mother was Catholic. Moune was brought up as a Catholic. We have in our family of three a daughter who is Buddhist, Moune Catholic, and I Jewish — we have no arguments about religion. We represent three great universal religions.

Before Moune and I were married, it became all too apparent that for the Prime Minister to have an American from the Embassy at his residence far too often, eating meals at the Prime Minister's table regularly, was much too conspicuous.

Bill Sullivan was the Ambassador. He is an old friend of the Souvanna Phouma family, and knew Moune way back from the Geneva Conference on Laos. Another ambassador could understandably have made my situation quite impossible. But Bill, on the contrary, was most encouraging. He was a good friend.

Q: Bill was a low level political officer in Tokyo when I first went there at the end of 1951 — I think he was the third secretary in the political section. He rose rapidly, of course, in the service.

STIEGLITZ: I guess he made his mark when Governor Harriman spotted him in Geneva at the Lao conference. Bill was markedly witty — a bright Irish wit.

1968: Branch PAO, Marseille, France

After Moune and I were married, we left within a week. The people in Washington couldn't have been kinder — my next post was as Branch Public Affairs Officer in Marseille.

Q: I met you when I was there on the inspection tour in 1969.

STIEGLITZ: Right. You came to our house. It was, of course, the perfect assignment. And, as it had been in Paris, my work involved much traveling, but this time exclusively across southern France. We would just go between Monaco and Bordeaux — a tough life. Again, our program, I think, was good. We were able to do a great deal with information

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and culture. At that time we had our landing on the moon, and the Moon Rock became accessible for exhibits which attracted much favorable attention.

Q: One of our high points in the Foreign Service, I think, at that time.

STIEGLITZ: I am sure that it was. Then I continued to have very good art shows. We had excellent exchanges with the universities. I, myself, would be invited to give lectures, which I was always happy to do.

During the two years we were in Marseille, the Consul General was another old friend from Laos, Philip Chadbourn.

Q: He was there the night I was at your house.

STIEGLITZ: Philip was often with us, and he liked to travel with us. Those were lovely years.

1970: Assignment In Washington As Coordinator Of Cultural Affairs For Western Europe Not Particularly Successful

Then I came back to Washington to a position which was created at that time in the European section as Coordinator of Cultural Affairs for Western Europe — a most highfalutin title signifying little. I had to scramble about to find what would fit into that category and to establish some programs. We did manage to have a few programs for the cultural attach#s in Europe, and I went over several times, but I was not that happy with my work in this period. For one thing, the Agency was in a technocratic phase — they thought the new machines would do everything, and that old standards could be disposed of. In other words, no use in having books when you have television, and nonsense like that.

Q: This was partly an Alan Carter concept.

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STIEGLITZ: Yes, it was carried over from Alan. He, though, had some good and challenging ideas. The way they were being interpreted was not good. In fact, it did a lot of damage. And Alan had some young prot#g#s who were not so hot and caused problems.

Circa 1973: Assigned As Cultural Affairs Officer, Thailand; A Highly Enjoyable Post From Program Standpoint, But Period Marred By Fall Of Saigon And Laos, As Well As Appointment Of A Political Ambassador Totally Unsited For The Assignment

At the end of several years in Washington, it was time to be on the move again. One of the positions that was going to be available was cultural attach# in Warsaw, and I was asked about that. I thought it would be just fine, even though it would have meant a long, intensive course in the Polish language at FSI before assuming that post. But just at that time, I went in to see my so-called advisor who was looking for an assignment for me. He said, "By the way, we have just learned this morning that the Cultural Affairs Officer in Bangkok is leaving."

Q: It was Ken MacCormac?

STIEGLITZ: No, Dan Eisenberg.

Q: Who was the PAO then?

STIEGLITZ: Jack Hedges. Well, when I heard of that possibility, I jumped up and said, "That job is mine. Don't even think of offering it to anyone else." A cable was promptly sent to Leonard Unger, our Ambassador in Bangkok, to the effect that I wished to be his new cultural affairs officer. An immediate answer came from Len saying, "Tell Perry and Moune we are waiting for them."

Q: Wasn't he Ambassador in Laos when you were there?

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STIEGLITZ: Yes, he was. During the year I was in Vientiane as Information Officer, Len was Ambassador, and so I had gotten to know him well. As you know, he is a fine man and was a fine ambassador.

Q: He was Ambassador most of the time I was in Thailand. He arrived about four months after me, and was still there when I left.

STIEGLITZ: And I got there after you left, and Jack Hedges was PAO.

Our four years in Bangkok from the point of view of what we were able to do professionally in cultural affairs were excellent. But those were also the dark years. In the middle of that period, Saigon fell. And then, when Saigon fell, Laos fell. One of my brothers-in-law swam across the Mekong to escape — he had to for he knew he was being sent up to prison camp the next day. My other brother-in-law and his family were able to flee across the river in a pirogue one night some months later.

In Bangkok during those years, we watched the expansion of the American Alumni Association where vast numbers of Thais came to learn English. That center became, I think, almost too successful.

Q: When I was there we finally combined the USIS library with the cultural center under the guidance of a wonderful elderly Thai gentleman, Phra Bisal, who had founded the center several years earlier. He is really the father of it all — a wonderful man. I understand he is still living but in a wheelchair and in very bad shape.

STIEGLITZ: I heard a few months ago that he was very ill.

When Len Unger left, we had an unfortunate interlude with an American ambassador who never should have been ambassador. It took, I am afraid, almost two long years before he was recalled. Then he was replaced by the veteran diplomat Charlie Whitehouse.

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Q: When did Len leave, and who was his replacement?

STIEGLITZ: Len left shortly after we arrived. The next ambassador — so help me, I see him clearly but can't remember his name (name provided by transcriber: William R. Kintner). I remember much too much about him, but suspect that anyone who served with him bears indelible memories.

Q: Was he a political appointee?

STIEGLITZ: Decidedly. He came from some right wing institute. He couldn't hold his drinks and got out of hand on several formal occasions. He was quite disgraceful as an ambassador. It was an absolute embarrassment to be in the presence of this man as he carried on, and harangued, high ranking and highly dignified Thais.

Otherwise, aside from the international situation and the problem I have just mentioned, Bangkok was, as you, Lew, know full well, a great place in which to live. The hyperactive social life is part of the professional life — we would often know two weeks in advance where on each of the following nights we would be going to a reception and afterwards to some dinner party or other — but it was fun. I had some very good friends in the ministries and among the heads of the universities — personal relationships that proved enormously helpful in accomplishing our goals. The Fulbright program was outstanding.

Q: There was a big organization in Bangkok supporting the Fulbright program there. The best I have ever seen.

STIEGLITZ: It was exceptional.

You may have remarked that at the end of speaking about each of my assignments, I say it was an excellent one. They were all excellent, and Bangkok was certainly so. After I had been there for almost four years, the PAO asked me if I would stay on for another two years.

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Q: *Who was the PAO?*

STIEGLITZ: Jim McGinley. I spoke to Moune about staying another two years, and the idea appealed. Then we decided that we were becoming so much part of the scenery of Bangkok that if we stayed on for two more years, we would never want to leave. So we decided the time had come to say farewell to Bangkok.

Then Jim McGinley asked what I wanted for my next assignment, and I replied without hesitation to be cultural attach# at a large European post. He insisted that that would be a major mistake — that in the Agency for me to remain as CAO would reflect adversely upon me. He stated there was no future to that, and the time had come for me to become a PAO. I explained that I wasn't interested in being a PAO — my interests were primarily in cultural affairs.

Soon, thereafter, the position of cultural attach# in Brussels became open, and I was offered that position — precisely what I had wanted. So we went to Brussels.

Q: *Before you get to Belgium, you probably know that in my day in Thailand we had a very extensive field program, which was not oriented so much culturally as it was towards the insurgency that was taking place in the north. We had been forced by Washington to discontinue that program, and we turned the whole thing over to the Thais who clearly didn't want it in the first place and didn't do much with it. But we did have this big network of field offices. Do you think anything was lost in your program by the loss of these offices?*

STIEGLITZ: There were only three of four branch posts open when I was there, and I think the BPAOs continued to make some use of those contacts, but they, of course, couldn't use them to the extent that you did. Those contacts didn't make much difference to my programs which were targeted principally at the universities. I did travel to all of the universities — Chiang Mai, Hat Yai, and the others — quite regularly. I tried to keep our relationships there strong, and sent lecturers, some performing musicians, and even art

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exhibits to them. One semester I gave a course at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Chiang Mai, though, was, I guess, everyone's favorite city.

Q: That was the number two city in Thailand.

STIEGLITZ: Chiang Mai was very different, but the university in that city was quite good. Perhaps, though, I was just too engaged in Bangkok to be able to sense those changes in the field that you speak of.

Q: Well, with the exception perhaps of Khorat and Chiang Mai, at that time the cultural aspect of the program was not nearly as important as trying to get out into the boondocks and convince the rural Thais that they ought to withstand the attempts of the communists to recruit for the insurgency. That is all changed now. When President Nixon accomplished the opening with China in 1972, the Chinese stopped subsidizing the Thai insurgency and everything changed. So I don't think the change would have affected your program so much.

STIEGLITZ: As I mentioned, we were there when Saigon fell and when Laos fell, and we fortuitously had a large house and a guesthouse, which was often filled with refugees, mostly members of the family.

Therefore, all in all, those four years in Bangkok were mixed between this most pleasant sense of being there and the terribleness of what was happening all around us.

Q: Well, we shall leave Bangkok now and proceed to Brussels.

1977: Assignment To Brussels, Belgium, As Cultural Affairs Officer—Trouble With The PAO

STIEGLITZ: Jim McGinley's advice to stop being a CAO came sharply to mind soon after I arrived in Brussels. The PAO there was, if anyone can be so described, truly anti-cultural.

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Q: Who was that?

STIEGLITZ: You are asking me all the names, Lew, of people I would rather not identify by name, but here goes — it was James MacIntosh. He had a shaky reputation. When he was serving at a certain African post, his staff went on strike — they could no longer stand him. But he had some powerful friends in the Agency, including our woman now in Rome, Jody Lewinsohn.

At the Brussels cultural center, there is a beautiful space for art exhibits, in the handsome library. I naturally was eager to make use of it, and when a cable came from the art section of the Agency offering us a traveling Motherwell exhibit, I immediately drafted a cable saying, "As soon as possible." The cable had to be approved by the PAO, that is, MacIntosh. My draft was returned the following day with his note on it stating, "Let's have no more such dilettante stuff."

The problem: the American Ambassador to Brussels was a remarkable woman by the name of Anne Cox Chambers. She is the head of the Cox family and the Cox Foundation of Atlanta, and her newspapers had supported Jimmy Carter for the presidency. Carter chose Anne to be his ambassador to Brussels, and she was determined to be the very best ambassador possible — nothing was to stop her from this goal. Some at the embassy, including MacIntosh, looked down upon her as a political appointment.

The Ambassador was seriously interested in art. She is active in the Atlanta Art Museum and on the board of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She found herself with a PAO who was completely negative to her suggestions. She had heard from a mutual friend that I was coming out, and when I arrived she greeted me and would from time to time call me to her office to discuss cultural programs.

Knowing the suspiciousness of the PAO's mind, each time I met with her, I would report to his office and tell him that the Ambassador had asked me to see her and wanted this or

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that programming. He would sort of mumble, “Why isn't she telling me? Why is she telling you?” I tried to be discreet, but knew there was an obvious relationship problem.

Finally one of his actions caused her to ask Washington for him to be replaced. Then I learned that MacIntosh had been telling his friends back in the Agency that I had been under- cutting him — trying to knife him. He made me out to be the villain in the piece.

Although I had previously received excellent fitness reports, his parting gift to me was an unsatisfactory fitness report. Anne Chambers in her statement appended on to it flatly contradicted his appraisal of me, claiming that I was outstanding.

This is the sort of thing that is apt to happen in any organization, and it surely did happen within the Information Agency. I can laugh about it now, but I wasn't laughing then — it was thoroughly unpleasant.

However, I stayed on in Brussels for four years. Having the great support of the Ambassador meant that I could do things in a big way — for instance, have Van Cliburn play for her dinner guests, or put on an exhibit in my center of Saul Steinberg that received a three-column story and photo in the Herald Tribune. Those were heady days.

Q: Was the Ambassador there during the entire period you were there?

STIEGLITZ: Yes, the entire period.

Q: It concluded, I presume, with the demise of the Carter administration.

STIEGLITZ: As soon as he was defeated, she resigned. Moune and I continue to see Anne Cox Chambers — we are good friends. Knowing her and working with her was a great joy. But the MacIntosh part — and he was supported by the Agency — left a bad taste.

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Q: Yes, I had one experience like that I documented in my interview. Was Brussels your last Agency assignment?

Retirement At Age 60: Post-Retirement Activities

STIEGLITZ: It was. I was just sixty, and they were cutting back on the retirement age.

Q: And shortly after that the Supreme Court decided they had to let you stay on until 65.

A.Thompson Foundation Work Re Third World Media-Authorship Of Book About Laos—
Escort Services For Department of State

STIEGLITZ: But that decision was too late for me.

After a while, I was asked to be the representative for the Thompson Foundation of London which helps the third world media. I did that for a while. I published a book about Laos, which received good reviews, including one in the London Times Literary Supplement. The book is in its second printing, not a best seller but on many library shelves.

In my years as a cultural attach# I had always been interested in the International Visitors Program. I enjoyed trying to select people for that program who would be the right people to send to the States. I would work with them on their 30-day stay in the States — helping them choose what to see, with whom to ask for appointments. Back in the States, working on my book, I volunteered to do some escort work for the Department with some of the International Visitors, and accordingly I did a few escort jobs.

B.Stieglitz Becomes Representative For Gibraltar In The U.S.

One was with the leader of the minority of the parliament of Gibraltar. I traveled about America with him for more than three weeks, and found him remarkable — brilliant, witty, with great qualities. Some two years later I received a phone call from Gibraltar saying,

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"Perry, I have just been elected Chief Minister, and you're my ambassador to America." Ever since, I have been trying to represent Gibraltar in America, and it has gone very well. Gibraltar is now primarily an offshore finance center, and as such is making great progress. It is becoming well known in financial circles. Two weeks ago the International Bar Association had its convention in Bermuda and asked me to come out to speak to them about Gibraltar. I have just shown you, Lew, this new Peat Marwick brochure featuring Gibraltar. And here is the American Airways magazine with an article on tourism on the Rock. I am working as hard as I ever have, and enjoying it completely. And will keep on for the time being.

Q: So you have a piece of the Rock?

STIEGLITZ: I sure do. If you look on the wall behind my desk, Lew, you see a picture of me holding hands with one of the apes on the Rock.

Q: This must be a great satisfaction to you.

STIEGLITZ: It is. And needless to say my years in the Service contributed mightily to my ability to cope with this position.

Observations On Status USIA Accords To Cultural Affairs Officers

Q: It gave you contacts on which you can draw now in your new job. Before we close this interview, as we mentioned while we were walking up here, I know that you are one of those that found that the cultural officers generally get the short end of the stick in the U.S. Information Agency, and, perhaps, have not been given their due. You say you don't care so much about it promotionally, but you feel from the standpoint of prestige that they haven't been able to get the Agency to let them measure up to their contribution in the program. So I would like you to say a few words about it before we close this interview.

STIEGLITZ: I know my point of view is very unpopular in the Agency.

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Q: You are not alone.

STIEGLITZ: No, I am not alone. There have been a hard core of us who have been devoted to cultural affairs in the Agency and who have always maintained that although everyone pays lip service to how important the cultural side is, this is talk for the most, and when it comes to the running of the Agency, the emphasis is overwhelmingly on the information side. I believe the cultural side must be given more independence. And since we have gotten to this point, I will now propose my plan which is an outrageous plan and will cause almost everyone at USIA to shudder and say, "Shut up."

Here it is. At each embassy, an ambassador definitely needs a press attach# to handle the dissemination of information. He also needs a cultural attach# to handle the embassy's cultural role and programs. What the ambassador does not need is some bureaucratic nonsense in which you have a PAO who almost invariably leans more to the information side and who acts as a great interference for cultural affairs. That appalling example I cited before of a PAO ruling that an Agency-organized Motherwell exhibit was for dilettantes and was not to be tolerated at his post is, unfortunately, not so far removed from other examples that could be cited. It would seem that the *raison d'être* of a PAO is to interfere bureaucratically with his press and cultural attach#s. They have precise jobs to do — the PAOs do not.

I am convinced that press and cultural affairs representation in the embassies could be far smaller and at the same time more effective than they are. I think USIA is far too large. I have seen far too many USIS programs on which much money and time were spent which were not used or were quite ineffective. We have a tendency to do this. At one time on the information end, we all suffered through that business of Bob McNamara's scheme to decide the cost effectiveness of everything. In Laos they were testing the cost effectiveness of the Voice of America broadcasts being transmitted to that country. To do this they had to base the calculations on the number of Lao listening to the broadcasts. The trouble was that no one had the vaguest idea in the world as to how many people

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were actually listening to them. The exercise on which much time and money was spent was nonsense.

We can cut down. Give cultural affairs its own side — as Senator Fulbright always wanted to do — and information its own side. Let's be more responsive, more effective. Let's cut down on the wasteful bureaucracy.

With these words, it is a good thing I am no longer a part of USIA.

Q: Well, in a few choice words can you give me a final summation of what you think about your career in the Agency even considering the difficulty on the cultural side from time to time; what you think about it and what you feel about your accomplishments?

STIEGLITZ: Let me say that I loved being in the Foreign Service. I can't imagine positions that would have made me happier than those I have had. I have cherished each one of them. I think I have been a very lucky kid.

Q: Well, I am glad you feel that way about it despite your unhappiness sometimes over the cultural side's status and recognition.

STIEGLITZ: Oh, I will argue over the cultural bit at the drop of a hat.

Q: I thank you very much, Perry, for giving me this opportunity to talk to you.

STIEGLITZ: Thank you, Lew.

End of interview